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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000238

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DEPT. FOR EUR/SE, NEA/ELA, AND NEA/PI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMPI](#) [TU](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: CONDEMNING ARREST AND ARRAIGNMENT OF
SYRIAN DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS

REF: STATE 11025

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) We conveyed the substance of reftel demarche urging condemnation of the SARG's arrest and detention of democracy activists in Syria February 8 to MFA Department Head for Middle East Kerem Kiratli and Lebanon/Syria Desk Officer Cem Ulusoy. Kiratli undertook to convey the substance of the demarche to Deputy Under Secretary Sinirlioglu and Under Secretary Apakan.

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¶2. (C) Similar to the GOT's response to the demarche seeking public condemnation of Syria's negative influence over political events in Lebanon (septel), the Turks have and will continue to focus on engaging Damascus to slowly sever its overreliance on Tehran and end its support for Iran's destabilizing role in the region. For that reason, public Turkish condemnation of the SARG is unlikely. However, GOT officials have conveyed, and will continue to convey, strong private messages to President Asad and the SARG that it must change its behavior to avoid further international efforts to isolate it.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turkey>

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